

*10 April 2006*  
*Monday*

## READINGS

Psalm 10; Lamentations 1:1-12; II Corinthians 1:1-70; Matthew 21:12-17

## DEVOTION

When I was a young boy growing up in the Crenshaw District of Los Angeles, California, my mother's favorite phrase was, "Not in my house." She had a list of house rules that my brother, sister and I had to abide by. In short, she didn't allow us to have company in the house when she was not home, use bad language, watch distasteful videos or movies on TV and keep our rooms or the house dirty. By the time I reached sixteen I no longer wanted to adhere to the "house rules" so I decided to buck the system.

One Saturday afternoon I invited several of my friends over for fun and games. We ate junk food, played cards, watched videos, listened to music and after a few hours managed to turn the house into a pigs pen. Later that day my mother returned home from shopping and went ballistic. She exercised complete authority over our house and immediately sent my friends home! Then without hesitation or mental reservation she sent me to my father's house to live for an entire school semester. My mother refused to tolerate foolish and disrespectful behavior from me or my friends.

Over 2000 years ago Jesus did a little house cleaning. He exercised divine authority over God's house by overturning the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. Jesus said to them, "My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers" (Matthew 21:12-13). Jesus transformed the marketplace Temple into a healing Temple for people Pharisaic law excluded from Temple worship. God's house was designed to provide free access to God, not to oppress and distract people away from God. Instead of concentrating on making money, those who appear at God's house are to seek glory.

Today the words of my mother and the teachings of Jesus continue to speak to my soul and challenge me to keep my spiritual house in order. This year during Lent I plan to let go of those things in my life that are displeasing in the eye sight of God. This year during Lent my desire is to discipline my mind and body, to study and serve God more intentionally and aggressively.

After all, the last thing I want to hear at this stage in my life is the voice of my mother or God saying, "Not in my house!" I'm convinced that if I stay in the will of God I can and will make a few radical spiritual changes in my life this Lenten season. What about you?

Prayer: Lord, please go in front of me to guide me, stay behind me to catch me and dwell around me to sustain me today, tomorrow and surely forever. Amen.